

fifth German Chancellor, the lover of Plato and Beethoven, are as incontestable as his temperamental unfitness for the post of pilot in stormy seas. His book is pitched throughout in a minor key. We seem to hear the plaintive accents of Hamlet lamenting that the times were out of joint and that he was called to set them right. Since Russia was lost, owing to her alliance with France, the only chance of escape from encirclement was an agreement with England. Unfortunately he inherited an estrangement which he vainly strove to heal. His policy was to meet British demands with regard to the fleet in return for a neutrality pact, but neither side was willing to make the necessary sacrifice. He was not master in his own house, for Tirpitz had the Kaiser's ear. Still more tragic was his failure to assert himself in the critical days of 1914. He should have insisted on being consulted by Austria at every step of the way instead of handing Berchtold a blank cheque. His pages on the outbreak of war reveal a good man contributing by his blunders to the catastrophe which he was as anxious as Grey to avert. Like Aberdeen in 1854, he drifted into war, hoping to the end that England and Russia would not fight. Compared with his full-blooded rivals, Tirpitz and Ludendorff, he is a shadow on the wall. The second volume is filled with the struggle against the military and naval advisers of his master. When the renewal of the submarine war was decided at the opening of 1917 he realised the madness of a step which involved the belligerence of the United States. He argued against it, grudgingly accepted it, remained in office instead of resigning, and was roughly evicted by the Generals six months later. There are few more depressing careers in recent times.

The leading statesmen of Russia have also told their story,

The most striking apologia among the older generation is that of Witte, whom his friend and factotum Dr. Dillon used to describe as Russia's only statesman and the ablest Russian since Peter the Great. "I am neither a Liberal nor a Conservative," he used to say, and indeed he was the loneliest figure on the stage. He despised the feeble Tsar, and Nicholas II detested his rough-mannered Minister, Written abroad after his fall from power in 1906, his Memoirs contain even more than the usual number of distortions and tricks of memory as well as the customary animosities of disappointed men. His depreciation of the people with whom he worked, except his old master Alexander II, leaves a disagreeable impression. He alone